The Call Letter.

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IS AUSTIN MUSIC ALL WASHED UP?

LATEST CRISIS HAS CLUB OWNERS' HEADS SPINNING

"We'll get things ironed out," vow city officials.

By J. Keen

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It's late Saturday night, and you're standing in a dank, dark club eyeing the diverse crowd, feeling relaxed, trying to get a taste of that special something that Austin has to offer on this particular night as on hundreds of others like it. A catchy guitar hook from the previous band's set is still playing in your head. You're feeling slightly drunk, but it's O.K. You glance at the stage. The crowd is noisy, energetic, and yet there seems to be a certain uneasiness in their movements that can't be defined. Perhaps the next band is taking too long to set up. Or maybe it's just the heat. There is a jostle coming from the rear of the room. Suddenly you sense something is wrong. A collective groan issues from the crowd as loud, rumbling sounds begin to vibrate the floor. "It's a bad scene, man," someone mutters. People begin to leave.

You've probably experienced this little scenario, or something like it, before. Or maybe you've just overheard the complaints of friends. Unfortunately, what you are seeing are the telltale signs of a problem that is becoming all too common in the music business of late: People doing their laundry at live music shows.

PLEASE TURN TO PAGE EIGHT, COLUMN ONE.

ktsb

91.7 cable fm

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The Call Letter gleefully welcomes any submissions. for more info, please contact the Editor at 471-5106

Strength is not the same as anger....

As the sweat wrinkles behind my ears and I inhale the last saccharine-coated cinnamon roll from the Texan vending machine, this issue seems to finish itself or so I let myself imagine...I can't stop humming those songs. They mirror my curt responses that I've doled out heavily this evening. Don't run away and let me down in less than kinder words rolls off my lips more times than I want to count. Well, I mistakenly assumed I'd be here exactly 180 minutes or two tapes worth so after the eighth time on the same English Beat album, it imprints memorably on the 'ol brain humming mechanism. Save it for later colors the conversations, perhaps substituting for a less subtle torrent of expletives. And for the umpteenth time I wonder what the hell am I doing here, I mean writing, filling up this dreaded white space. Not that I don't want to. But my pen was not the intended one, if you know what I mean.

No one gives a damn, she thinks. Again and again, like everyone says, you'll never know the difference five years later. And no one will care. Deadlines don't make the world go 'round. And inconsistency certainly lends an element of surprise at times.

She said to leave it to the end of the party. I think I missed it. It's okay. They say it's always just starting somewhere else tomorrow. I guess I've pulled back my cover a little bit and somehow writing this is becoming quite a stress releaser. Maybe even therapeutic, as I acknowledge that taking yourself too seriously definitely sows sods of crabgrass underfoot and gives birth to some pretty thorny relationships.

While it's on my mind, as opposed to somewhere else, I want to mention a thank you or two. We've never run our enormous thank you list of KTSB supporter -those musicians, students, UT officials, personnel, alumni and everyone in the Austin community who have financially, mentally or spiritually supported student radio from it's inception. You know who you are and we love you a lot (that damn Beat song again). We thank you for realizing the importance of creating a student run radio station in this town. Honestly, we're in our fourth month of operation thanks in part to the combined efforts of a lot of amazing people.

-sp

"Don't look now, but isn't that a porpoise over there?"

KTSB playlist for May 22-June 10

1.. **Texas Instruments** *Sun Tunnels* (Rabid Cat)
2. **Poi Dog Pondering** *Poi Dog Pondering* (Texas Hotel)
3. **Michelle Shocked** *Texas Campfires Tapes* (Mercury)
4. **Billy Bragg** *Help Save the Youth of America* (Elektra)
- **Camper Van Beethoven** *Our Beloved Rev..*(Virgin)
- **Under the Covers** *compilation* (Warner Bros.)
5. **Wayouts** *cassette*
- **Wigglies** *Psycho B cassette*
6. **Colors** *soundtrack* (Warner Bros.)
7. **Bad Mutha Goose** *Bad Mutha Goose* (Fable)
8. **Pogues** *If I Should Fall From...* (Island)
- **Stump** *A Fierce Pancake* (Chrysalis)
- **Dentists** *EP* (Antler)
9. **Mighty Lemon Drops** *World Without End* (Sire)
10 **Ballad Shambles** *EP* (Skyclad)
- **Glass Eye** *Bent By Nature* (Bar None)
- **Butthole Surfers** *Hairway to Steven* (Touch n Go)
11.**Bongwater** *Double Bummer* (Shimmy Disc)
- **Miles Davis** *Ballads* (CBS)
- **Clash** *Story Of...* (Epic)
12.**Robyn Hitchcock** *Globe of Frogs* (A&M)
- **Mekons** *So Good It Hurts* (Twin/Tone)
- **Church** *Starfish* (Arista)
- **Mission of Burma** *EP* (Taang!)
- **Durutti Column** *The Guitar & Other...* (Factory))
13.**Woodentops** *Wooden Foot Cops...* (CBS)
- **Ziggy Marley** *Conscious Party* (Virgin)
- **Alison Rogers** *cassette*
- **Midnight Oil** *Diesel & Dust* (CBS)
- **Young Fresh Fellows** *Totally Lost* (Frontier)
- **Beatnigs** *Beatnigs* (Alternative Tent.)
- **"Honeymoon in Red"** *various* (Widowspeak)
14 **The Fall** *Palace of Swords* (Rough Trade)
- **The Pixies** *Surfer Rosa* (4AD)
- **Pajama Slave Dancers** *Blood, Sweat & Beers* (Restless)
- **Creepers** *Licorice Flavor* (Red Rhino)
- **Jesus & Mary Chain** *Sidewalking* (Warner Bros.)
- **Soup Dragons** *This is Our Art* (Sire)
15.**NoMeansNo** *The Day Everything...* (Alternative Tent.)
- **Salem 66** *Natural Disasters...* (Homestead)
- **Smithereens** *Green Thoughts* (Capitol)
- **Prefab Sprout** *From Langley Park* (Epic)
- **Invisible Pedestrians** *Invisible Pedestrians* (Pampoon)
- **Vomit Launch** *Exiled Sandwich* (Rat Box)

These are the Thursday night 10 pm. feature albums for the coming weeks.

July 14 -- Big Star 'Sister Lovers'

July 21 -- The Fall 'Live at Witch Trials'

July 28 -- 13th Floor Elevators 'The Psychedelic Sounds of...'

Aug. 4 -- Byrne/Eno 'My Life in the Bush of Ghosts'

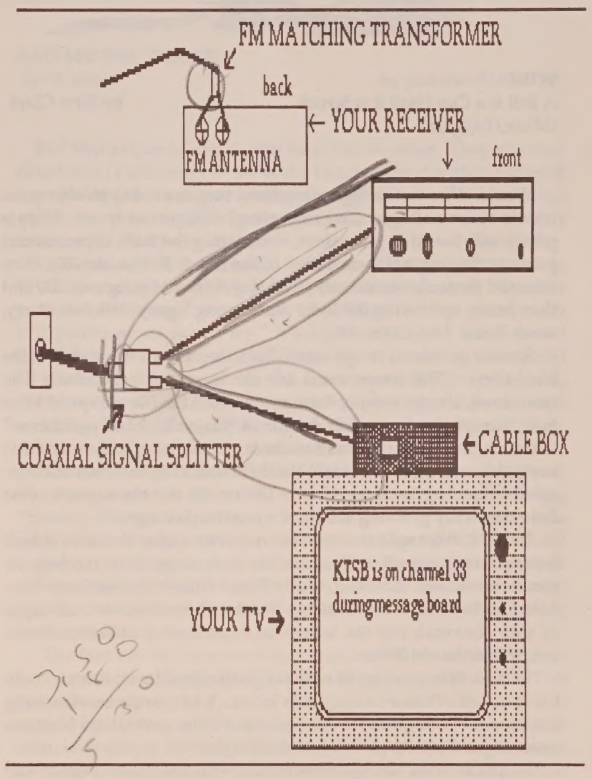
Aug. 11 -- Big Black 'Atomizer'

HOW TO GET ktsb AND CABLE RADIO
The Do-It-Yourself Method

KTSB is transmitting its signal through cable until it begins broadcasting on FM. When you get wired to cable radio, you will get ktsb, all other Austin stations, MTV, VH-1, HBO and Cinemax in stereo. If you have Austin CableVision you only need the following to get cable radio:

1. A signal splitter
2. An FM matching transformer
3. Two coaxial cables

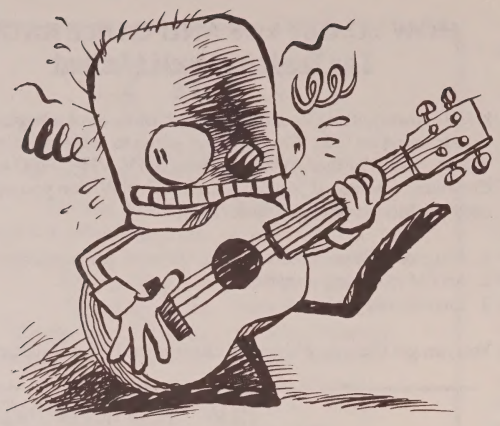
You can get these at Wholesale Electronics, Radio Shack, etc.



Here's how to hook it up:

1. Connect the signal splitter to cable coming out of wall.
2. Connect the two pieces of cable to the other end of the signal splitter.
3. Connect one cable to your cable box (for your TV).
4. Connect other cable to the FM matching transformer.
5. Connect the FM matching transformer to the antenna jack on your receiver.

That's it! Now you can tune in 91.7 and enjoy KTSB Austin's Alternative
For more information call us at 471-5106
Be sure to call Austin CableVision and let them know you have cable radio.



WIRE
A Bell is a Cup Until it is Struck by John Clark
(Mute/Enigma)

Would Wire be the legendary band they are today solely on the merits of their albums after reforming? No, probably not. Wire is pretty safe listening these days, contrasting the stark experimental punk of the original incarnation of the band. In the late 70's, they released three classic albums *(Pink Flag, Chairs Missing and 154)* and then broke up leaving behind a challenging legacy with few, if any, weak links. Not anymore.

Similar problems weigh down both the new album and 87's *The Ideal Copy*. The songs are a bit too long and repetitive. The restrained, almost techno, drumming should baffle many old Wire fans, though the dance club rhythm of "Come Back in Two Halves" is the only real disappointment here. However, the lyrics of this song give us some insight into the difficulties the band has encountered in getting back together: "Oh no it's not the same, in two halves quickly growing whole, it's not the past again."

In 1979, Wire split into two halves, with Colin Newman (black hair) putting out albums under his own name with the help of drummer Robert Gotobed, while Bruce Gilbert (guitar) and Graham Lewis (bass) formed Dome. Neither the melodic soundscapes of solo Newman nor the industrial experiments of Dome sound much like the old Wire.

The new Wire, instead of returning to original form, sounds more like a union of these two projects in search of more accessible song structures. Though not totally successful, the new album contains several good efforts to redefine their style.

"Silk Skin Paws" starts off the album with disjointed lyrics of fear and guilt contrasted against soothing violin fills and mellow drumming. An interesting, even pleasant song similar in effect to the single "Kidney Bingos" and "Free Falling Divisions, " but not real exciting.

Fortunately, the second song, "The Finest Drops," gets the album going. It begins with a forboding industrial beat jumpstarted by a hard-edged guitar. Watch out for the chorus in this one; it sounds something like 10cc in a wind tunnel, but fits right in. The band unloads on the final cut on side one, "It's a Boy," a tense buildup of a song ending in some angry jamming.

On side 2, the lyrics rescue some of the weaker songs. A spacey one-line chorus of "lock up your hats" redeems "Boiling Boy." And the free association word games of "Kidney Bingos" ("flag stunt rock stone, dole axe crash dive") continue to challenge listeners when the music bogs down.

The album closes with "A Public Place," which sounds like a remix of *The Ideal Copy's* "Feed Me," with obtrusive guitar blasts punctuating a plodding beat. This is one of the better tracks on the album, and definitely the most abrasive one.

For Wire *A Bell is a Cup...* is not the past again. The album documents the progress of a changed band, tastefully incorporating their past into a synthesis of their current ideas.

BONGWATER
Double Bummer by Jay Robillard
(Shimmy Disc)

Bongwater's first EP, *Breaking No New Ground*, seemed too short a spurt to fully exhibit their talent for altering cover songs and reeling off originals from the experimental beyond. I mean, just when they're hitting their stride the side is over (there are only three songs on each side). Well, *Double Bummer* takes care of all that. Four full-length sides let you in on all the mischief and mayhem the band teased everyone with in 1987.

About one-third of the album was written by performance artist/actress, Ann Magnuson. Actually she co-wrote her third with Kramer, and in those songs she slings out line after line of twisted storytelling which wanders off the subject into oblivion but always returns in the end to connect with the story's beginning. Using a motor-mouthed delivery she portrays many different characters: political activist in "Joyride," wealthy, helpless damsel in "Decadent Iranian Country Club," abusive female in "Frank," jealous girlfriend in "His Old Look" and a daydreaming groupie rambling underneath the band's droning cover of "Rock 'n' Roll, Pt. 2." Her most amazing vocal on the record, however, is her wailing rendition of Led Zeppelin's "Dazed and Confused." You've got to hear it to believe it!

The most immediately striking feature of *Double Bummer* is the way the band treats the cover versions, and the covers they choose. Now these covers are not just another rehash of "Eight Miles High" and "Louie, Louie." This stuff is for LP fans only.

The original version of "Dazed and Confused" is pretty much heavy metal godhead. It soars, it swoops, it rocks — all to good effect. How can you follow an act like that? I mean, what's the use in recording another version of a song if you can't enhance it in some way? Well, instead of competing with Led Zep's style, Bongwater took a completely different approach. They translated the lyrics to Chinese, sang it in a Yoko One screech and renamed it "Dazed and Chinese." What a concept.

The last remake I'd ever expect to hear is one of the Soft Machine's experiment in repetition, "We Did It Again." Bongwater's chugging rendition repeats the title 73 times, whereas it's tirelessly repeated 123 times in the original. Soft Machine treats the Kevin Ayers composition more as an endurance test, but Magnuson's heavy breathing and excited vocals add a sexual undertone to their version.

Other covers include Johnny Cash's "There You Go," The Monkees "Just May Be The One," a sharply anti-Reagan sing-along called "Reaganation" and two from the Beatles "Love You To" and "Rain." All are done in Bongwater's twisted vision.

Dead space between songs is a rarity thanks to the random insertion of just about anything from short religious jabs to clips of Nixon speeches to a profanity-filled argument between two foreigners. Given their variety it seems that these blurbs came from quite an extensive accumulation of recorded history as well as amusing nonsense. They segue through the gaps smoothly giving the whole album a mischievous air. If you listen closely to the beginning of "Crime" you can make out a piece of Iggy Pop's

audience-taunting dialogue from the Stooges' *Metallic K.O.*

Dave Rick, former guitarist with Phantom Tollbooth; David Licht, former drummer for Shockabilly; and Kramer, former bassist for Shockabilly, create layers of instrumentation which underscore every song on the record with a thick drone. Kramer's production also adds touches of reverb here and there and a trademark accent on the bass.

Kramer's songs are slow dirges with various recorded voices popping out now and then for the listener's amusement. Headphones are highly recommended. With the first couple of listenings his songs passed by me as chaos while I mused at length over the clever cover songs and Magnuson's rantings. It wasn't until the third and fourth playings that his compositions undermined my interest and caused me to tune into the thick, meditative atmosphere they were creating. Side four especially exhibits his soothing style.

From the "first bummer" through the fourth *Double Bummer* stands as a well-conceived variety of music made to fit the band's personality. It maintains a feel of spontaneity while sounding controlled at the same time. The band obviously has a sense of humor, but they apply it subtly to avoid sounding silly. Even though they closely parallel Shockabilly, Bongwater performs more cohesively making their album flow more smoothly than any by Shockabilly. This can be attributed in part to Kramer's production experience. Let's face it, he's hitting his stride as far as establishing a consistently individual style. And he's doing it without sounding the least bit polished or over-worked. Now that's no bummer at all.

RICK SAL
Perfume and Sweat By Willy Nilly
(Catapult)

I, being a completely ambigious and unintelligible deviant, would best choose to let Mr. Sal describe himself to you: "Suppose Woody Allen and Alfred Hitchcock were to go steady, get married and have a baby. That child would be me, the Woody Hitchcock of rock and roll." I would take that to mean he considers himself an overweight manic depressive who likes the macabre. Doesn't that strike you as a rather strange self-image for one to have of oneself?

It was once written of Sal that upon listening to three songs from this cassette the reviewer found that Sal had a strange, or was it serious, problem with women and the reviewer felt compelled to listen no further. Perhaps I agree with this evaluation in a sense. It would seem from the lyric sheet included in his press kit that he has suffered, or maybe enjoyed, some strange and somewhat depressing experiences with women. At times, the stories he tells are so frighteningly realistic that you want to laugh out loud. Whether this is intentional or not remains lodged in the brain of Mr. Sal. I would hate to think I was laughing at a life's worth of misfortunes suffered by a poor soul who is trying to exorcise his past through his music.

In a particularly novel twist on the old cowboy-meets-girl but leaves to ride into the sunset theme called "The Wild Frontier" Sal says, "Once knew a woman who said, I was her hero in bed, but unlike the stories I've read, she packed her bags and left, now this old legend's in debt, and the lump sum's beneath her dress." I'll leave that one up to you. In another tune, called "Baby You're a Lemon," Sal speaks of (admits?) a certain fear of being labeled a bad lover. Did he coin the phrase, "baby you're a lemon," or did it come to him like a bolt out of the past.

I'm not sure that I'm grasping his intentions. Perhaps I, a product of society, am being to harsh on Mr. Sal. Who is to say that his songs are not completely serious. Maybe he wrote the lyrics to be considered as fictional accounts of the everyday lives of one of us and of all of us.

From a technical standpoint I am certain that he is serious. He recorded the entire tape himself on his home studio. He played and programmed all the instrumentation and wrote all the words and music. From this point, I respect Mr. Sal for turning out a finely honed piece of music. For the most part the music consists of keyboards and a drum machine. You might be thinking heavy rhythm/synth type stuff, but it's not like that at all. The songs are very soft and subtle. In my view the songs become a bit repetitive and it becomes hard to tell where one has stopped and the next has begun if you're not listening closely. In any case, *Perfume and Sweat* seems worth the time, if you've got it.

BAD MUTHA GOOSE
EP-(Fable) by Jennifer Alexander

Bad Mutha Goose is an Austin band like no other. They mix funk (like that of Parliament or Sly & the Family Stone) with bits of both rap and African music to create an energetic brand of music that makes one want to shake one's "groove thang." On their recently released EP, BMG shows their true colors and shows them well.

The first cut, "Be Somebody," is perhaps the strongest one on the EP. It's certainly truest to their style. With advice such as, "If you've got a dream I know you can do it," and, "You're never gonna make it if you're never gonna try," it's highly optimistic but also real enough that it's message is uplifting and not annoying to the point of grating on the listener. It also has the steadily grooving beat, characteristic of BMG, that keeps the feet moving and/or the neck working. In addition, a part of the song has interaction with an audience-like group, a key element in their live shows.

The next song, "One Man, One Vote," was produced by Spot. The song turns it's attention toward apartheid with lines like, "Slavery of any kind is wrong, and I can prove it." It consists of a steady beat with excerpts from news reports about South Africa and a speech by Gary Hart thrown in. The band adds their own commentaries in the background also. The side closes with a small continuation of the melody to "One Man, One Vote" and a bit of rap to close it all out.

The first cut on the second side is an instrumental which I was lucky enough to hear in it's formative stages at a show earlier this year. It is appropriately titled "Jump the Funk." It's rhythm is carried by a drum machine, a drum kit and various other percussion, including a cowbell. It's a very funky piece but leaves one wishing it would progress into something a little more improvisational and spontaneous, sort of a crazy jam by the whole band.

After "Jump the Funk" is a short rap/scratch interlude done by J.T. Def, the producer of three out of four songs on the EP. It has a short horn break at the beginning and a pretty entertaining rap.

The last song is a remix of "Be Somebody," which doesn't vary much from other remixes. It doesn't contain much in the way of lyrics, but the chorus, "I am somebody," is repeated many times throughout the song. There are some nice instrumental breeaks (my favorite is the conga part) that keep the song, and hopefully the listener, moving.

The only criticisms I can make about the EP are that it could have contained moe material and that the band could have been a little bit freer and more improvisational with the songs. This group has so much energy in their live shows I wish the tone of the EP were more like that. Overall, it's a very pleasurable piece of wax to groove by and rather exemplary, in general, of Bad Mutha Goose's work.

By Greg Headley

When you're in a rock and roll band every night is Saturday night. However, the next day you gotta get up and drive a few hundred miles to the next town. It's kind of like going to church with a hangover. Soul Asylum stopped in Austin for two nights in June to preach their own style of rock and roll. The band; Dave Pirner on vocals and guitar, Dan Murphy on guitar and vocals, Karl Mueller on bass, and Grant Young on drums; have recorded their first album for A&M Records and are trying to adjust to being a successful band. In spite of being successes they're easily approachable guys who like to talk about their music.

Good morning to the Soul Asylum band...

Call Letter: Last night you were having a little sinus trouble again. Last time you guys played here right in the middle of a song you had this booger hanging out of your nose, but you just kept on playing. And then it happened again last night. I feel like it's something special to Austin.

Dan Murphy: That's just misfortune. It wasn't supposed to happen even once. I was so embarrassed when Dave goes 'Hey man you got a booger hanging out of your nose,' and I reached up there and... It doesn't happen to Mick Jagger or any of those creeps.

CL: How long has the band been together?

DM: Grant joined in '84 and Dave, Karl and I had been together since about '82. As soon as Grant joined we started touring a lot and turned it into a full-time thing.

CL: Had you recorded anything before he joined?

DM: We recorded a single about four months after he joined and then did *Made To Be Broken* a few months later. Then we toured on that for like six or seven months.

CL: Do you always tour that much?

DM: Yeah, pretty much about half the year. But we've had to learn to pace ourselves. You can't just go out drinking every night, we tried that for a while. I had too much fun up in Dallas and I didn't feel much like playing last night. We found out that you can't live the rock and roll lifestyle like most people think. I mean, sure you get to travel and have a lot of fun but you can't just party and then pop up there and play every night.

CL: Does being on a major label help you out as far as touring is concerned?

DM: It's just a case of the record selling better so we can get better guarantees. They don't really kick in much money. We could get it but we want to remain independent of it. Basically it's just the comfort factor. When you're a band like us stuff is always breaking. We just had to buy a new van and amps always screw up and people travel with us. Really it's just a matter of having enough to have a decent place to sleep when you're off the road. We sure as hell ain't getting rich off this.

CL: Why is it that most of the bands coming out of Minneapolis seem to remain independent of the "music business?" Even a big success like Prince has remained fairly independent of the business.

DM: The city is really supportive of bands doing original stuff. The clubs don't try to push bands into doing cover songs and stuff like that. It's a really good city for original music. Austin is a really good city for original music too, but it seems like people have this idea that every band sounds like the True Believers. I suppose Minneapolis has the same problem with Husker Du and the Replacements and maybe even us.

CL: Is Husker Du broken up for good?

DM: Yeah, in a bad way.

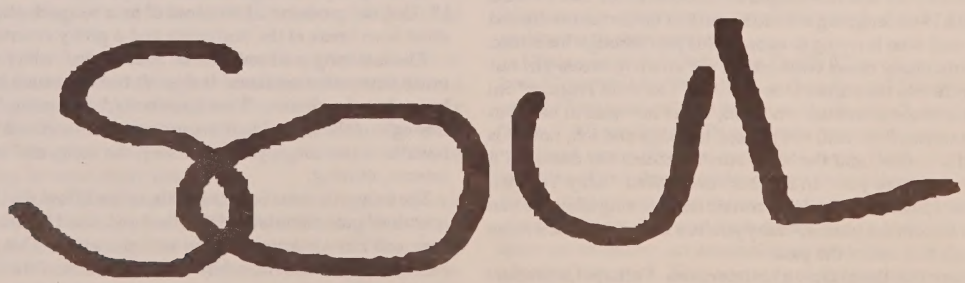
CL: I know Bob Mould (of Husker Du) produced some of your earlier stuff but how did you go about choosing a producer for *Hangtime*?

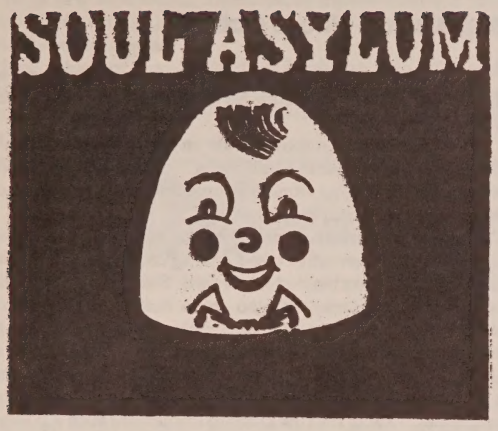
DM: We made a list of possible producers and met a few, but a lot of them were industry types who didn't really seem to get what we were trying to do. Lenny (Kaye) came to Minneapolis and met us, and he was cool about everything. But to use him we were gonna have to find a good engineer because Lenny's not that great at twirling the knobs. So he introduced us to Ed Stasium who's a great engineer. They were pals and had wanted to work on a project together so they co-produced it.

CL: I think it has more of a feel for the way the band sounds live.

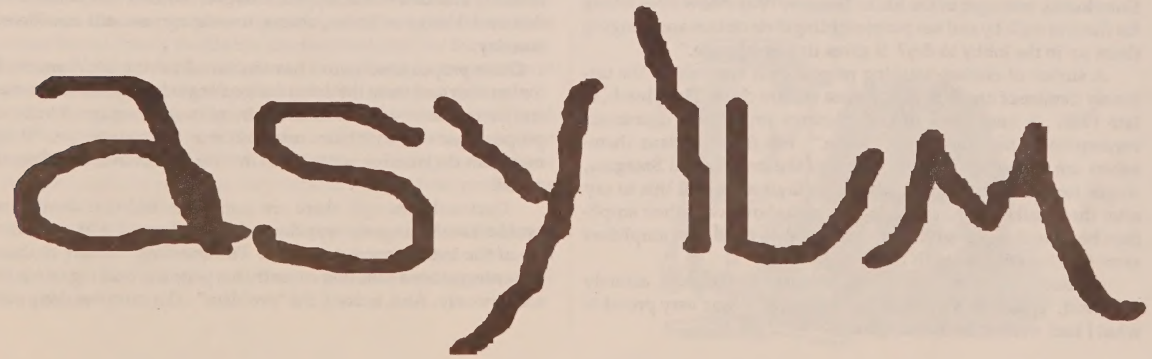
DM: Yeah, it has a little more polish but it's more powerful and sort of louder in a way.

CL: Have you ever thought about doing a live album?





DM: Yeah, we've recorded some stuff live but it always sounds like crap when you listen to it later. I mean the chance that everybody is gonna be in tune and play every part right is so small. We've done some stuff live in the studio which works out pretty good. We recorded this EP called *Clam Dip and Other Delights* that is never gonna be released. We did some covers for that live in the studio.
CL: How did the deal with A&M come together?
DM: We talked to them and Warner Bros. and Capitol. Warner Bros. wasn't really that interested and I was kind of afraid of what Capitol wanted to do with us. A&M was really cool. They just said 'Hey, we like you guys and you can do what you wanna do,' so things with them have worked out well.
CL: How many albums are you going to do for them?
DM: We've got a two album guarantee and then they can drop us if they want.
CL: Back to the shows, do you guys always just sort of wing it live like you were doing last night?
DM: Yeah, it's more fun that way. I get bored with playing the same stuff in the same order every night. Usually somebody will play the first chord of a song and everybody else will pick it up from there. If we were playing someplace like the Ritz in New York we would use a set list but otherwise it's just gets boring. Sometimes you don't feel like playing what's on the set list so we just kind of go with what we feel like playing. It's works a lot better that way.
CL: How many days a week do you play?
DM: On this tour we're playing 28 nights and we have four nights off. We pretty much play every night most of the time. It's so boring on nights off.
CL: Have you ever played in Europe?
DM: Yeah, we just got back from there about a month ago. A&M wanted us to play because they're about to release *Hangtime* there. *While You Were Out* just got released on an independent label there. The shows went pretty well but they're not really familiar with us there because our albums really haven't been available much.
CL: Why did you choose to do "Sexual Healing" (the Marvin Gaye song) last night?
DM: We've only been doing that for a few weeks. We do most covers just to see if we can make it through them. We were recording in New York and when we went out at night we were sick of hearing rock music so we went to clubs and would hear stuff like Sly Stone and Marvin Gaye and we just kind of liked the song. Dave bought the single a while later and we've been trying to work it out for a while.
CL: Do you do "Jukebox Hero" anymore?
DM: No, not much. We did it for that *Clam Dip* EP that will never be released.
CL: How do you guys go about writing songs?
DM: Dave's always writing words and stuff. He usually comes up with some chord changes and I might have a few little guitar parts and from there we pretty much just bash it out.
CL: Do you have to rehearse a lot to get all those weird time changes and breaks that so many of the songs have?
DM: Well, immediately when we come off the road I don't pick up a guitar for a week but then I pick it up and start playing around. I might come up with something and Dave might have some chord changes and we just put together the stuff that sounds good. Some of it kind of gets worked out on the road, but we pretty much spend a lot of time rehearsing when we're off the road. We have this little space next door to Twin Tone Records. It's air-conditioned and it only has one door, and it's metal, so nobody can steal our stuff.
CL: Who's coming up on Twin Tone?
DM: A band they're really touting is the Blue Hippos. They're a really good live band. They've also got Agitpop. They're one of my favorite bands, that album they just put out, *Open Seasons*, is my favorite album of the year. Run Westy Run is a Minneapolis band on SST. I think they're pretty good.
CL: And for the big question, what does Soul Asylum mean?
DM: Sorry to disappoint you but I don't really know. It was a thoroughly crummy song we had a long time ago so we chucked the song and kept the title. Dave came up with it so I guess you'd have to ask him.



Is Austin Music Washed Up?

continued from pg. 1

"It's a crying shame and an insult to those who come here to hear the music," says **Lance Eardrum,** an avowed clubgoer. "I mean, sure, I don't want to stand by someone with stinky underwear, but you can't hear a damn thing when the rinse cycle starts."

Many frustrated nightlifers will agree. "How can you dance with detergent caked on your shoes and anti-cling sheets stuck on your dress?" asked **Suzy Gelatin** after a particularly busy night recently at a popular local dancespot.

Whether these clean-minded club-going clotheswashers will adversely impact the Music Scene remains to be seen. There is a growing concern, however, that it may be too late to stop them.

Scene But Not Heard

Although widely praised by critics and audiences alike, the venerable Austin Music Scene has been beset by problems almost from its beginnings. Not the least among these are the "death" of many of the city's most vital music venues, the lack of support from local radio stations, the absence of a local business infrastructure to support the music community, and, ultimately, the failure of all those pootheads in **Los Angeles** and **New York** to appreciate and take seriously just how great and wonderful and impeccable everyone and everything in **Austin** is. However, these difficulties may prove minor in light of the insidious and growing trend of people bringing their laundry to shows, which some say could strike the final blow to a fledgling music industry in such desperate need of serious attention. But just how serious is the matter? And what can be done?

"It's a serious matter, and it must be approached by a serious, business-like, concerted effort," said city councilmember **Poot-Carl Cookman** after a recent public hearing.

"It needs to be studied further," added councilmember **Jorge "George" Turdphrey**.

But despite the attention of the city, it is the clubowners who are being hardest hit. "First the economy, and then the drinking age, and now this," bemoans **Brad Fourth** of the recently opened **Club Fido**. "I don't know what's worse— the people pestering us for change or the ones using the bar to iron their shirts."

Most clubowners can relate similar horror stories. "This used to be as fine a place as any for the punks and metalheads," said **Paul Snookums,** manager of the **Shitz Theater**. "Now how does it look for them to walk by and see people folding their clothes and hanging them up in the lobby to dry? It gives us a bad image."

A surfeit of clothes-washing neighbors is blamed for the untimely demise of one of Austin's most vibrant clubs, **The Bleach**, in late 1986. A new wave of club closings could have disastrous consequences for the current "scene." But the musicians themselves are already feeling the effects of the trend. **Saul Smegma,** singer for local band **The Autistic Regurgitators**, had this to say after they walked offstage during a recent show when their amplifiers became clogged with lint: "We couldn't play. Our amplifiers were fucking clogged with lint."

As one local music journalist, **Michael Porkerman**, astutely observed, "It sucks." But he added wittingly, "I was very proud of what I had written on Speed Queen."

Ring Around Whose Collar?

It remains unclear exactly how the present situation had its beginnings, or who is to blame for it. There is no dearth of finger-pointing, however.

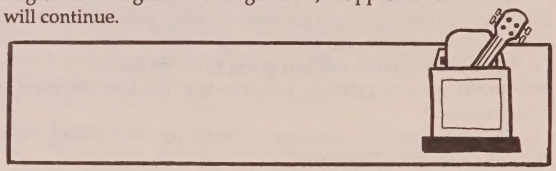
"It all started when those bands on Sixth Street started doing covers of detergent commercial jingles," says songwriter/producer **Burt Brackish**. "It's no wonder people are driven to do household chores when they hear crap like that."

The question of who is at fault is indeed a complex one. Some cite the clean-cut, conservative trend among college students. Others blame MTV. Others blame **Jack Brown.** Still others claim that it is the clubowners themselves who are to blame. In recent months several clubs have begun selling detergent to customers in an apparent attempt to turn the trend to their advantage, usually at the inflated price of $2.50 for an eight ounce box, a price many consider to be "outrageous." Yet sales have increased steadily despite the complaints. One of the first clubs to implement such a policy was **Big Maytag.** Says club owner **Sleeve Stainey**:

"Laundry. That's the key. The trick is to build up a steady laundry clientele that doesn't really give a damn about the music."

Stainey notes increased detergent sales across the board for clubs that have joined the recent trend of hanging their signs upside-down. "Soap's the only thing that keeps us afloat," he said.

Most observers seem to feel that such actions are a reaction to rather than a root of the problem, citing other factors as possible culprits. One wag has even suggested the predominance of **flourescent** lighting in laundromats as the cause of the mass migration to nightclubs. Regardless, it appears that the troubles will continue.



Warm Water Solutions

It is doubtful whether there is a simple answer to the current dilemma faced by musicians, clubowners, and concertgoers alike. Although several solutions have been offered, none appear to be adequate enough to fully remedy the situation.

One of the more interesting proposals was that of a nudists-only club. Proponents claimed that such an arrangement would render laundry unnecessary since the customers would not be wearing any **clothes.** The idea was scrapped, however, when it was pointed out that such things as linens, sheets, towels, etc. are still considered laundry.

Other proposed solutions have included having bouncers check for laundry baskets at the door, designating separate washing areas, and the implementation of a new minimum cleaning age. **The** latter proposal has met with bitter response from the younger set. "If my mom can do laundry, why shouldn't we be allowed to?" Gelatin asked.

Curiously enough, there are some who feel that there is no problem with things the way they are, as evidenced by the popularity of the latest dance step, **"The Tumble-Dry."** Many of these dissenters share a common concern that people are taking things far too seriously. And, indeed, the "problem" of laundry-washing may

not be as new as it seems. Noted blues-master **Clarence "Blind Biscuit" Jefferson, Jr.,** better known as **"The King of Wails,"** or **"Fats"** for short, agrees.

"Hell, when we used to play back Louisiana way folks used to bring their washing to shows all the time. We didn't care," he said. "There's a reason the washboard come into use as a musical instrument."

What Does the Future Hold?

What the future holds remains to be seen. But some say the whole issue of laundry and live music may be moot in light of the recent unveilment of city plans to build one huge **laundromat** that could cost taxpayers millions of dollars. Supporters of this massive undertaking claim it will bring as much as 500 million dollars into city coffers, citing similar projects in Houston and San Antonio, and create more than 500 new jobs. That's a lot of **quarters.**

"I think it is extremely important that we as a city move forward with a laundromat," said councilmember **Turdphrey.** "It would bring us one of the cleanest businesses known to man— dry cleaning."

Proponents claim the proposed laundromat will eliminate the need for many of the current smaller washing facilities scattered about the city, consolidating them into one centralized location. But there is considerable controversy over where this location should be. Despite much opposition, city consultants have decided upon a west end site, a decision that could mean bad news for one venerable downtown nightclub, **Puberty Lunch.**

"This isn't the first time they've wanted this block for something," said Puberty owner **Charlie Sitar.** "Before it was for another UT parking lot, then a hotel/retail/barbershop complex."

City planners, however, view the site as "the gateway to fabric softness," although some critics argue the whole project should be moved to **Manor,** where laundry facilities could be more easily expanded.

The issue is further clouded by financial questions. Sitar said the fiscal projections would probably never become reality. "I doubt all these people are saving their **dirty** clothes around Texas and the southwestern United States for Austin to build a laundromat so they can wash them here," he said. "San Antonio is a laundry capital."

While consultants tend to feel that it will all "come out in the wash," getting voter approval for such a project, some say, would be impossible.

"Nobody wants to get in hot water to the tune of $50 million to do laundry," Sitar said. "We'll take a **bath** in this thing forever."

Will Austin's struggling clubs be able to deal with the laundry lovers as they have dealt with past problems, and survive? The answer could be crucial to the future of Austin Music.

"Hell, I don't know," Snookums said. "I might as well open a damn **washateria.**"

The Rise and Fall of Big Mamou **by Alexis Arnold**

Last fall the Big Mamou opened it's doors offering a place for those who had prowled the Continental Club a place to see and hear a diverse assortment of local and national bands.

The club has a unique double identity. By day it is a cajun restaurant and by night a live music club. The two can co-exist quite well, but, as manager Brent Grulke points out, they do not compliment one another. The Big Mamou is easily one of the most popular spots in town to have good cajun food. The music side, however, is having many of the typical problems that go along with a live music club. The adequate, but not fantastic, acoustics and lack of it's own p.a. system are just two of the problems hindering the club. Other possible improvements could include carpeting and selling pitchers of beer. Although, carpet stinking of spilled beer would not be very appetizing to those who come to the restaurant. The club has also lost money because they are only allowed to sell beer and wine.

These are among the combination of factors that have made owner Steve Chaney decide to close the music half for the summer. He says, " In order for the club to survive we need to concentrate on what's working and that happens to be the retaurant right now."

For the summer the Big Mamou will be closed as a live music club. Only the restaurant will continue to operate giving them time to strengthen that half of the club and make some improvements to the music side. In addition, they hope to finish a beer garden just outside the club soon.

In the meantime, the Big Mamou may open occasionally during the summer for special shows. Go down there and have some red beans and rice and help their effort to continue serving good food and live music.

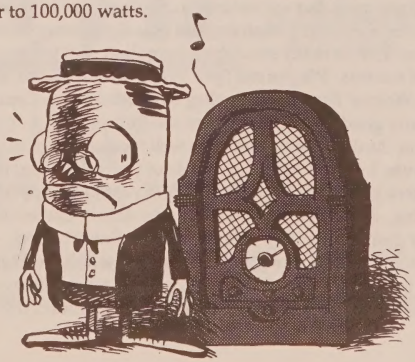
Radio Notes **by Greg Sells**

Add Lamar University to the list of campuses boasting student radio. KLSR, which had operated during the past year over speakers in the student center, should commence FM transmissions this summer.

Students at two schools narrowly approved fee increases to help their radio stations. CIUT, at the University of Toronto in Canada, needed a one-time levy to pay off debts left by it's conversion to FM only about a year ago and by some rampant mismanagement. KNLU, at Northeast Louisiana University, requested its allotment to sustain operations amidst the poor Louisiana economy.

KJHK, at the University of Kansas, cancelled a talk show appearance by a representative of the Ku Klux Klan. They also have a compilation album of local bands out called *Live From Lawrence.*

The station at North Texas University, KNTV, has boosted it's power to 100,000 watts.



CAMPER VAN BEETHOVEN

By Peter Blackstock

Camper Van Beethoven's show at Liberty Lunch on May 27 was fairly ordinary by Camper Van standards — but then Camper Van standards are about as far as you can get from standard.

Sure, you'll find a few other bands out there playing weirder music than these guys, but you'd be hard-pressed to find another band with such an intriguing combination of influences creating that weirdness. The Campers' colorfully woven basket of musical styles contains threads of psychedelia, folk, Arabic-flavored ethnic music, metal, country and, yes, even honest-to-goodness pop. In fact, it's the band's ability to fit so many alternative styles into what are often basically simple pop songs that makes them unique.

After three LP's and two EP's on their own independent label, Pitch-A-Tent (which they continue to operate), the band recently made the move to a major, Virgin Records. Multi-instrumentalist Jonathan Segel took a moment before the show to talk about the band's situation.

Call Letter: So, are things more big-time this time around now that you are on Virgin?
Jonathan Segel: I can't tell yet. We're playing the same sort of places; they have a little bit more people, but that's to be expected anyway. It's hard to tell what impact the record is having.
CL: Did you take much of a different approach toward this record because you were on a major label?
JS: We were working with a producer, an outside producer, for the first time. I liked it in some ways. We could reconcile band differences in that the producer has the ultimate say. But we lost a little bit of control on some songs that I didn't appreciate.
CL: The band still has it's label, Pitch-A-Tent — does it take a lot of time to keep it going?
JS: It takes an amount of time. I mean, not like we have a lot. Mostly I spend my free time recording. I'm recording my own record right now.
CL: Is anybody else in the band doing that?
JS: The Monks of Doom have a record out. That's Chris and Victor and Greg, with a guy from the Ophelias. That came out on Pitch-A-Tent about a month and a half ago. They're also recording with me, on some of my stuff. But we've hired a couple of people to take care of most of the accounting business and man the phones during the day. Basically, it's a really small-time operation. But we've put out some good records. We put out Spot 1019's second record, and the Wrestling Worms' first record — they're another Santa Cruz band, they're really good, with a large horn section.
CL: Do you think the band has been well received in Austin?
JS: We haven't played here in a couple of years, because, well we did play here about four times in the first year and a half that we were touring. And, well, for one thing, the Austin Chronicle hates us. I really don't know why. Maybe like the English Press — they just don't like us. And then, besides that, it just seemed there was never any promotion and the same 90 people would always come out to the show, so it really wasn't worth our 900 miles of driving to get here.
CL: Did you all come together in Santa Cruz?
JS: Yeah, I moved there to go to college, as did everybody. Except for Greg (Lisher, lead guitarist) — Greg grew up there, pretty much.
CL: Is there much of a music scene there?
JS: Yeah, there is quite a scene there. It's really been weird because there's really only two bars to play at, and they don't cater to any underground music, until you get big enough to actually — like one of them does Monday night alternative music. The other one is just an enormous old bowling alley that has major acts that go through. So they really wouldn't recognize us until lately, until they realized that we could fill up 800 people there. So there are a lot of bands there, but, like us, we mostly just played for our friends, like at parties for a long time.
CL: I know you play violin and other assorted instruments — what all do you play?
JS: Well, I'm really a guitarist, like everybody else. But I also play mandolin, violin, keyboards, recorder, whatever...
CL: Did you have a lot of musical training in that?
JS: I really taught myself how to play guitar. But then I went to college and majored in music and that's when I started playing violin, so I could play in the orchestra.
CL: That's one of the things that's really distinctive about the band's music, the different instrumentation.
JS: Yeah, I'm definitely not into a boring format of two guitars, bass and drums, because it's been used to death. I mean, modern composers aren't writing string quartets the same way they were 300 years ago. But people with the same guitar, bass, drum lineup are still writing the same music that people were writing 20 years ago. It's tired.
CL: Even on the new album a lot of it sounds pretty alternative for a major. Has Virgin been pretty cool about that?
JS: Virgin's really cool about it. They pretty much let us do what we want.
CL: How well have you been able to sell on Pitch-A-Tent, on your own?
JS: The first record, it's up around 35,000. People still think it's our only record in a lot of cases. The second record's a little less and the third one's about the same as the first.
CL: What about the new one. It's been getting good press.
JS: I just read the English press today, though; they hate it. They always hate us though.
CL: Have you been there before?
JS: Yeah, they hate us, They hated our shows, they hated our records. Really though it was just the English press not the people.
CL: Any other bands that you like right now?
JS: I like XTC, I think they're a great band. Except I hear they're working in Los Angeles right now. I had a bad experience working there and I think they'll have an even worse and bitter attitude about it.
CL: This was just for the latest record right?
JS: Yeah. I hate Los Angeles, I can't stand it. It's the attitude and the propaganda and it's so gloss-oriented. It's such an image place.

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7	Alternative Rock						Occidental Music
8							
9							
10							Oriental Music
11							
NOON							
1	Blues	New Sampler	New Age Electronic	Reggae	Pop History	Folk	
2							
3							
4							
5							
6	Campus Community Calendar/News & Sports Pacifica National News Service					Demos	Sports
7							Guest DJ
8							
9							Poetry
10	Reggae	Psychedelic	Feature Album	Feature Album		Hip Hop	Avant Garde Jazz
11				Industrial			
MID							
1					Metal	Hardcore	
2							
3							